

"THE WHITE MOLL"

BY FRANK L. PACKARD

Appearing every day in serial form in the Magazine Section of The Times.

(Continued from Yesterday)

If the last three days had been productive of nothing else, they had at least furnished her with the opportunity of studying the notebook she had found in the secret hiding place and of making herself conversant with the gang's cipher; and she now set to work upon it. It was a numerical cipher. Each letter of the alphabet in regular rotation was represented by its corresponding numeral; a zero was employed to set off one letter from another, and the addition of the numerals between the zeros indicated the number of the letter involved. Also, there being but twenty-six letters in the alphabet, it was obvious that the addition of three nines, which was twenty, could not represent any letter, and the combination of 999 was therefore used to precede any of the arbitrary groups of numerals which were employed to express phrases and sentences, such as the 739 that she had found scrawled on the piece of paper around her key on the first night she had come here, and which, had it been embodied in a message and not preceded by the 999, would have meant simply the addition of seven, three and nine, that is, nineteen—and therefore would indicate the nineteenth letter of the alphabet, S.

Rhoda Gray copied the first line of the message on the piece of wrapping paper:

3210102220230566631023301101022
10444202101112052110761

Adding the numerals between the zeros, and giving to each its corresponding letter, she set down the result:

601110565022090405014030509014

f a k e e v i d e n c e

It was then but a matter of grouping the letters into words; and, decoded, the first line read:

Fake evidence in...

She worked steadily on. It was a lengthy message, and it took her a long time. It was an hour, perhaps more, after Danglar had gone, before she had completed her task; and then, after that, she sat for still a long time staring, not at the paper on the chair before her, but at the flickering shadows thrown by the candle on the opposite wall.

Queer and strange were the undercurrents and the cross-sections of life that were to be found, amazingly contradictory, amazingly incomprehensible, once one scratched beneath the surface of the poverty and the squalor, and, yes, the crime, amongst the living thousands of New York's East Side! In the days—not so very long ago—when, as the White Moll, she had worked amongst these classes, she had on one occasion, when he was sick, even kept old Viner in food. She had not, at the time, failed to realize that the man was grasping, rapacious, even unthankful; but she had little dreamed that he was a miser worth fifty thousand dollars!

Her mind swerved off suddenly at a tangent. The tentacles of this crime octopus, of which Danglar seemed to be the head, reached far and into most curious places to fasten and hold and feed on the progeny of human foibles! She could not help wondering where the lair was from which emanated the efficiency and system that, as witness this code message tonight, kept its members, perhaps widely scattered, fully informed of its every movement.

She shook her head. That was something she had not yet learned; but it was something she must learn if ever she hoped to obtain the evidence that would clear her of the crime that circumstances had fastened upon her. And yet she had made no move in that direction, because—well, because, so far, it had seemed all she could do to protect and safeguard herself in the present miserable existence and surroundings, which, abhorrent as they were, alone stood between her and a prison cell.

Her forehead gathered into little furrows; and, reverting to the code message, her thoughts harked back to a well-known crime, the authorship of which still remained a mystery, and which had stirred the East Side some two years ago. A man—

in the vernacular of the underworld a "stage hand"—by the name of Kroner, credited with having a large amount of cash, the proceeds of some nefarious transaction, in his possession on the night in question, was found murdered in his room in an old and tumble-down tenement of unsavory reputation. The police net had gathered in some of the co-defendants on suspicion; Nicky Viner, referred to in the code message, amongst them. But nothing had come of the investigation. There had been no charge of collusion between the suspects; but Perlmutter, a shyster lawyer, had acted for them all collectively, and one and all they had been discharged. In what degree Perlmutter's services had been of actual value had never been ascertained, for the police, through lack of evidence, had been obliged to drop the case; but the underworld had whispered to itself. There was such a thing as suppressing evidence, and Perlmutter was known to have the cunning of a fox, and a code of morals that never faltered in the yellow, or restricted him in any manner.

The code message threw a new light on all this. Perlmutter must have known that old Nicky Viner had money, for, according to the code message, Perlmutter prepared a fake set of affidavits and forged a chain of fake evidence with which he had blackmailed Nicky Viner ever since; and Nicky Viner, known as a disreputable, shady character, innocent enough of the crime, but afraid because his possession of money if made public would tell against him, and frightened because he had already been arrested once on suspicion for that very crime, had whimpered—and paid.

And then, somehow, Danglar and the gang had discovered that the old, seedy, stoop-shouldered, bearded, down-at-the-heel Nicky Viner was not all that he seemed; that he was a miser, and had a hoard of fifty thousand dollars—and Danglar and the gang had set out to find that

hoard and appropriate it. Only they had not succeeded. But in their search they had stumbled upon Perlmutter's trail, and that was the key to the plan they had afoot tonight. If Perlmutter's fake and manufactured affidavits were clever enough and convincing enough to wring money out of Viner for Perlmutter, they were more than enough to enable Danglar, employed as Danglar would employ them, to wring from Nicky Viner the secret of where the old miser hid his wealth; for Viner would understand that Danglar was not hampered by having to safeguard himself on account of having been originally connected with the case in a legal capacity, or any capacity, and therefore in demanding all or nothing, would have no cause for hesitation, failing to get what he wanted, in turning the evidence over to the police. In other words, where Perlmutter had to play his man cautiously and get what he could, Danglar could go the limit and get all. As it stood, then, Danglar and the gang had not found out the location of that hoard; but they had found out where Perlmutter kept his spurious papers—stuffed in at the back of the bottom drawer of his desk in his office, practically forgotten, practically useless to Perlmutter any more, for, having once shown them to Viner, there was no occasion to call them into service again unless Ciner showed signs of getting a little out of hand and it became necessary to apply the screws once more.

For the rest, it was a very simple matter. Perlmutter had an office in a small building on lower Sixth Avenue, and it was his custom to go to his office in the evenings and remain there until ten o'clock or so. The plan then, according to the code message, was to loot Perlmutter's desk some time after the man had gone home for the night, and then, at midnight, armed with the fake documents to head off old Nicky Viner in his miserable quarters over on the East Side, and extort from the old miser the neat little sum that Danglar estimated would amount to some fifty thousand dollars in cash.

Rhoda Gray's face was troubled and serious. She found herself wishing for a moment that she had never decoded the message. But she shook her head in sharp self-protest the next instant. True, she would have evaded the responsibility that the criminal knowledge now in her possession had brought her; but she would have done so, in that case, deliberately at the expense of her own self-respect. It would not have excused her in her own soul to have sat staring at a cipher message that she was satisfied was some criminal plot, and have refused to decode it simply because she was afraid a sense of duty would involve her in an effort to frustrate it. To have sat idly by under those circumstances would have been as reprehensible—and even more cowardly—than it would be to sit idly by now that she knew what was to take place. And on that latter score tonight there was no argument with herself. She found herself accepting the fact that she would act, and act promptly, as the only natural corollary to the fact that she was in a position to do so. Perhaps it was that way tonight, not only because she had on a previous occasion already fought this principle of duty out with herself, but because tonight, unlike that other night, the way and the means seemed to present no insurmountable difficulties, and because she was now far better prepared, and free from all the perplexing, though enormously vital, little details that had on the former occasion reared themselves up in an insistent aspect before her. The purchase of a heavy veil, for instance, the day after the Hayden-Bond affair, would enable her now to move about the city in the clothes of the White Moll practically at will and without fear of detection. And further, the facilities for making that change, the change from Gypsy Nan to the White Moll, were now already at hand—in the little old shed down the lane.

And as far as any actual danger that she might incur tonight was concerned, it was not great. She was not interested in the fifty thousand dollars in an intrinsic sense; she was interested only in seeing that old Nicky Viner, unappealing, yes, and almost repulsive both in personality and habits as the man was, was not blackmailed out of it; that Danglar, yes, and hereafter, Perlmutter too, should not prey like vultures on the man, and rob him of what was rightfully his. If, therefore, she secured those papers from Perlmutter's desk, it automatically put an end to Danglar's scheme tonight; and if, later, she saw to it that those papers came into Viner's possession, that, too, automatically ended Perlmutter's persecution. Indeed, there seemed little likelihood of any danger or risk at all. It could not be quite 10 o'clock yet; and it was not likely that who-ever was delegated by Danglar to rob Perlmutter's office would go there much before 11 anyway, since they would naturally allow for the possibility that Perlmutter might stay later in his office than usual, a contingency that doubtless accounted for midnight being set as the hour at which they proposed to lay old Nicky Viner, by the heels. Therefore, it seemed almost a certainty that she would reach there, not only first, but with ample time at her disposal to secure the papers and get away again without interruption. She might even, perhaps, reach the office before Perlmutter himself had left—it was still quite early enough for that—but in that case she need only remain on watch until the lawyer had locked up and gone away. Nor need even the fact that the office would be locked dis-may her. In the secret hiding-place here in the garret, among those many other evidences of criminal activity, was the collection of skeleton keys, and—

—She was moving swiftly around the attic now, physically as active as her thoughts.

(Continued Tomorrow)

MAY SHOW U. S. "PEACOCK GLIDE"



Madame Radjah.

Madame Radjah is quite some bird. Now that isn't slang, for madame puts to shame the aristocrat of birdland when she does her version of the "peacock glide." Heretofore she has confined her activities to Europe, but eventually Americans may have an opportunity to gaze on the twinkling toes which have brought her fame and fortune. She has been appearing lately in Paris.

WOMAN RELATIVE IS CHARGED WITH KIDNAPING GIRL; NEIGHBORS HUNT CHILD



Mrs. Isadore Kramer with Ida, missing daughter, and another child.

Miss Esther Tannenbaum, twenty-eight, a relative, is under arrest charged with the kidnaping of Ida Kramer, seven, of Woodbury, N. J. Miss Tannenbaum is a cousin of Ida's father, Isadore. The girl disappeared from her home March 25. She was not found at the time of Miss Tannenbaum's arrest. The cousin denies the charge.

PLAN LONG RUN FOR PASSION PLAY IN OPEN CALIFORNIA AMPHITHEATER



"Suffer Little Children to Come Unto Me."

A scene from the Passion Play, being brought to life during the present Easterfest for the first time in many years, at Los Angeles. Like an American Oberammergau, it will run through the summer in an open air California amphitheater.

POLISH PRESIDENT GETS RESIGNATION OF HIS MINISTERS



Marshal Pilsudski, Polish president.

Failure of the negotiations between the Polish government and the Vilna delegation regarding the text of the act of annexation of the Vilna district to Poland is said to have brought the resignation of the Polish cabinet. Premier M. Ponikewski is said to have handed President Pilsudski the resignation of the entire cabinet.

HERE'S WALSH IN "UMPS" UNIFORM



Ed Walsh, snapped while umpiring exhibition game in south.

Not so bad, eh? It's a strange uniform for Ed Walsh, once wonder pitcher of the Chicago White Sox. He was signed up as an umpire by Ban Johnson last winter and is now getting in trim for the American league battles this year by umpiring exhibition games between the Boston Braves and the teams they're meeting on the training jaunt.

PHILLIPS NAMED AIDE TO HUGHES



William Phillips.

William Phillips of Massachusetts has been named under secretary of state, succeeding Henry P. Fletcher, who resigned that post to become U. S. minister to Belgium. State department employees recall that Phillips' first appointment in the diplomatic service was that of second secretary to the U. S. legation at Peking, where he succeeded Fletcher.

When A Girl Marries

By ANN LISLE.

CHAPTER 526

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"Use this to checkmate our friend R." I murmured, my eyes slipping vaguely across the line of writing Jim had sent Mabel Storrs. Then, my mind focussing on the situation, I looked up with an apologetic smile, and confessed, "For a moment, I actually didn't realize that 'R' is Dick West. He isn't the sort of man you'd ever think of as 'Richard'."

"I had the same difficulty," said Miss Storrs. "I puzzled away for several minutes. Then I realized that such a message must come more or less codified. And on the list of people we have to fear, there is no one else whose given name or surname begins with an R."

"This is meant as a warning—as well as a weapon," I said grimly. "No doubt," she agreed, frowning her lips over the words. "The message advises that the more sturdy and strenuous use we make of the money, the better. And the remarkable part of it all is that if we hadn't saved that Arizona land through your money—it might have been too late for the check to do any good."

I fidgeted as she spoke. We were verging on dangerous ground. I'd learned my lesson in regard to this remarkable woman—had learned it for all time. She is the dominant type—one of those women who naturally want to "run the ranch."

Loyalty to the task Jim left her merges with her natural tendency to wish to manage things and to do her own way. I didn't want to have introduced into the atmosphere the drop of acid there would be in her realization that it was I who'd saved the day. So I swung back with more insistence than I would otherwise have shown to the topic of the check which had accompanied Jim's warning.

"Do you know," I grinned, "I'd like to hold the check from my husband in my own two hands. I'd like the feel of it. This means he's taken his first step toward saving the day. You understand my childish desire to—witness the symbol?"

"Yes," it means the beginning of new movement for Mr. Harrison," acquiesced Miss Storrs. "He's starting to put over what he went away for. You know there are just two ways he could have—made good. One was by some miracle of finding that things weren't as bad as they looked. The properties he's interested in might have turned out to be more valuable than he dared hope. The people he mistrusted could have proved an honest lot, after all. Failing either of those miracles, I suppose you realize there was only one way for Mr. Harrison to wrench success from failure and to save his friends from ruin."

"I'm not sure that I do," I confessed.

"It seems to me rather unlikely that any of the lands he holds—except possibly the Arkansas strip—are very valuable. But if any of them can be worked something may be salvaged from the wreck. And if there is oil somewhere along the line it won't be missed now and the land sold for a song. You see the point, don't you, Mrs. Harrison?"

"Yes, I think I do," I replied slowly. "The point is to have plenty of money to—fine-tooth-comb the property for productive soil."

"For a moment or two it was enough for me just to hold in my hand the slip of paper which Jim had touched—the check he had written. Then I let my eyes drop, to my clutched fingers."

In a moment I realized that the check wasn't in Jim's writing. It was instead, made out to him, "Pay to the order of James H. Harrison," it read in a bold dashing round hand. The writing seemed to be that of a woman. But the signature was "R. Cordes."

I looked up and found Mabel Storrs' eyes fixed on my face with something at once pitying and challenging in their gaze.

(To Be Continued)

ADVICE TO THE LOVELORN

By BEATRICE FAIRFAX

Who Occupies a Unique Position in the Writing World As An Authority on the Problems of Girls

None of life's prizes is given free. All the valuable things in this world must be earned.

Friendship is a thing to win by merit. Sometimes it requires a difficult process of adjustment. Always it requires tact, unselfishness and understanding. It may even demand putting up with annoyance and unfairness. And it can never exist without tolerance.

The give and take of friendship requires unselfishness and sacrifice. If you aren't prepared to pay the price of adjusting your wishes to those of someone else, you can't hope for a well-rounded, deeply-founded friendship.

Haven't you ever been all set for a quiet evening of mending and patching, with a good story to top off the work, and then had your best friend telephone that she had a miserable headache and the blues, and wouldn't you come out and take a walk with her, please? What did you do?

If you're any kind of friend you probably got out of your comfy slippers and kimono, did up your hair again, and set off for the rescue of the chum whose faith you'd hate to fail. She would do as much for you any time, and you know it.

Most folks are fairly sane and square where friendship is concerned. But when it comes to love—that's another story.

Lovers seem to think that they owe it to some elaborate system of "keeping him guessing" or "showing her where she stands" to forget all sane ideas of fairness and squareness and to become tyrannical and exacting.

The wife who craves all her husband's devotion might as well realize that it takes merit and not mere desire to hold that devotion. If she can't talk about a thing but the wonderful new hat Mrs. Jones wore yesterday and the impudent way the grocer took it when she told him the lamb wasn't as good as usual, is it amazing that her husband isn't as much stimulated as he was in the days when he was a-courting a girl who was all eagerness to go to baseball games with him and to hear the events of interest in his business life?

The give and take of human relationship is a finely adjusted thing. Through it we earn our friendship and our loves.

The give and take of business isn't a widely different affair. Business is built on exact and fair dealing, and so

change of wares and service. The exchange principle is back of just about every transaction on the face of this earth.

There's a basic honesty in folks that makes them respond with enthusiasm to all fair dealing. Kindness and sweetness and devotion and generosity are useful adjuncts for man or woman anywhere along the line of human relationships. It's nothing more or less than square dealing for an individual to show consideration of the viewpoint of any other individual with whom he's having a relationship—be it business or social.

The only way to get a friend is to be one. And the only way to be a friend is to think in terms of the other fellow and not exclusively in terms of self.

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